



BRUCELLOSIS

Brucellosis is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria of the genus *Brucella*. Passed primarily among animals, these bacteria cause disease in many different vertebrates.

Symptoms

In humans, brucellosis can cause a range of symptoms that are similar to the flu and may include fever, sweats, headaches, back pains and physical weakness. Severe infection of the central nervous systems or lining of the heart may occur. Brucellosis also can cause long-lasting or chronic symptoms that include recurrent fevers, joint pain and fatigue.

Infection

Humans generally become infected in one of three ways: eating or drinking something that is contaminated with *Brucella*, breathing in the organism (inhalation), or having the bacteria enter the body through skin wounds. Direct person-to-person spread of brucellosis is extremely rare. Mothers who are breastfeeding may transmit the infection to their infants. Sexual transmission also has been reported.

Vaccination/Prophylaxis

There is no vaccine available for humans.

Treatment

Although treatment for brucellosis can be difficult, doctors can prescribe effective antibiotics. Usually, doxycycline and rifampin are used in combination for six weeks to prevent reoccurring infection. Depending upon the timing of treatment and severity of illness, recovery may take a few weeks to several months. Mortality is low (<2%) and is usually associated with endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart).

For more information, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378.